

The Ways of Byzantine Philosophy

*The Ways
of Byzantine
Philosophy*

Edited by **Mikonja Knežević**

Sebastian Press
Alhambra, California

The ways of Byzantine philosophy / Mikonja Knežević, editor. — Alhambra, California : Sebastian Press, Western American Diocese of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Faculty of Philosophy, Kosovska Mitrovica, 2015.

476 pages ; 23 cm.

(Contemporary Christian thought series ; no. 32)

ISBN: 978-1-936773-25-1

1. Philosophy—Byzantine Empire. 2. Philosophy, Ancient. 3. Philosophy, Medieval. 4. Christian philosophy. 5. Christianity—Philosophy. 6. Orthodox Eastern Church—Byzantine Empire—Doctrines—History. 7. Orthodox Eastern Church—Theology. 8. Philosophy and religion—Byzantine Empire. 9. Theologians—Byzantine Empire. 10. Christian saints—Byzantine Empire—Philosophy. 11. Byzantine empire—Church history. 12. Byzantine empire—Civilization. I. Knežević, Mikonja, 1978— II. Series.

Contents

Georgi Kapriev

Philosophy in Byzantium and Byzantine Philosophy 1

Dušan Krcunović

*Hexaemeral Anthropology of St. Gregory of Nyssa:
“Unarmed Man” (ἀοπλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος)* 9

Torstein Theodor Tollefsen

*St. Gregory the Theologian on Divine Energeia
in Trinitarian Generation* 25

Ilaria L. E. Ramelli

Proclus and Christian Neoplatonism: Two Case Studies 37

Dmitry Birjukov

*Hierarchies of Beings in the Patristic Thought.
Gregory of Nyssa and Dionysius the Areopagite* 71

Johannes Zachhuber

*Christology after Chalcedon and the Transformation
of the Philosophical Tradition: Reflections on a neglected topic* 89

José María Nieva

Anthropology of Conversion in Dionysius the Areopagite 111

Filip Ivanović

Eros as a Divine Name in Dionysius the Areopagite 123

Basil Lourié

*Leontius of Byzantium and His “Theory of Graphs”
against John Philoponus* 143

Vladimir Cvetković

*The Transformation of Neoplatonic Philosophical
Notions of Procession (proodos) and Conversion (epistrophe)
in the Thought of St. Maximus the Confessor* 171

Gorazd Kocijančič

Mystagogy – Today 185

Uroš T. Todorović

*Transcendental Byzantine Body. Reading Dionysius
the Pseudo-Areopagite, Gregory of Nyssa and Plotinus
in the Unfolded Marble Panels of Hagia Sophia* 197

Slobodan Žunjić

*John Damascene’s “Dialectic” as a Bond
between Philosophical Tradition and Theology* 227

Scott Ables

John of Damascus on Genus and Species 271

Ivan Christov

Neoplatonic Elements in the Writings of Patriarch Photius 289

Smilen Markov

“Relation” as Marker of Historicity in Byzantine Philosophy 311

Nicholas Loudovikos

*The Neoplatonic Root of Angst and the Theology of the Real.
On Being, Existence and Contemplation. Plotinus – Aquinas – Palamas* 325

Dmitry Makarov

*The First Origin, Thinking, and Memory in the Byzantine Philosophy
of the Late Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries:
Some Historico-Philosophical Observations* 341

Ioannis Polemis

Manuel II Palaiologos between Gregory Palamas and Thomas Aquinas 353

Constantinos Athanasopoulos

*Demonstration (ἀπόδειξις) and its Problems for St. Gregory Palamas:
Some Neglected Aristotelian Aspects of St. Gregory Palamas’
Philosophy and Theology* 361

Mikonja Knežević

*Authority and Tradition. The Case of Dionysius Pseudo-Areopagite
in the Writing “On Divine Unity and Distinction” by Gregory Palamas* 375

Milan Đorđević

Nicholas Cabasilas and His Sacramental Synthesis 391

Panagiotis Ch. Athanasopoulos

Scholarios vs. Pletho on Philosophy vs. Myth 401

George Arabatzis

Byzantine Thinking and Iconicity: Post-structural Optics 429

Leontius of Byzantium and His “Theory of Graphs” against John Philoponus

Basil Lourié

1. Introduction

Who¹ was the prototype of the Acephalus in the *Solutio argumentorum a Severo objectorum* (CPG 6815) [thereafter *Solutio*] by Leontius of Byzantium?²

Some early scholars believed that it was Severus of Antioch in person.³ Even Aloys Grillmeier continued – probably after Brian E. Daley⁴ – to say that

1. The article was written with the support of the Russian Foundation for Basic Research, project Nr 13–33–01026 “The Function of Concept of Force/Possibility in Aristotle’s Natural Philosophy.” I would like to express my gratitude to Dmitry Birjukov for his continuous help and fruitful discussion of related topics and to Dirk Krausmüller – for both discussions on Leontius of Byzantium and improving my translations into English from Greek.
2. The works of Leontius will be quoted according to the unpublished PhD thesis by Brian E. Daley, *Leontius of Byzantium: A Critical Edition of His Works, with Prolegomena*, Oxford University 1978 [thereafter B. Daley, *Leontius*] (with page numbers only) but providing as well the references to the columns of PG 86.
3. Friedrich Loofs evaluated Severus’ authorship of a hypothetical polemical work answered by Leontius in the *Solutio* as only “wahrscheinlich;” F. Loofs, *Leontius von Byzanz und die gleichnamigen Schriftsteller der griechischen Kirche*, 1. Buch: *Das Leben und die polemischen Werke des Leontius von Byzanz*, TU III, 1–2, Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs’sche Buchhandlung 1887, 35. However, Johannes Peter Junglas, without further argumentation, was going as far as considering the Leontius’ work as the only remaining source of the text of the lost Severus’ polemical work whose existence, to Junglas, was no longer hypothetical but quite certain: “Demnach hatte Leontius eine polemische Schrift Severs als Vorlage seiner Arbeit. Die von Leontius in der *Epilysis* vorgebrachten *ἀπορίαι* Severs sind bez. ihrer Richtigkeit kontrollierbar an uns noch erhaltenen Fragmenten Severs;” J. P. Junglas, *Leontius von Byzanz. Studien zu seinen Schriften, Quellen und Anschauungen*, Forschungen zur Christlichen Literatur- und Dogmengeschichte, Bd. 7, H. 3, Paderborn: F. Schöningh 1908, 3–4, here 3).
4. Brian E. Daley, without mentioning Richard’s criticisms (see below, n. 6), continued to insist on the existence of a lost Severus’ work behind Leontius’ polemics: “Although there is no mention of Severus in the body of the text, the title identifies him as the source of objections; if this is true, the most likely date for the work’s composition would be the time when both Severus and Leontius were in Constantinople, between the winter of 535 and March, 536;” B. Daley, *Leontius*, xxxiii. Thus, Daley tried to treat the title *Ἐπιλύσεις τῶν ὑπὸ Σεβήρου προβεβλημένων συλλογισμῶν* in the most literalistic way, even though he himself was realising that this is not the unique option. Even Richard Cross calls the Acephalus “a placeholder for Severus, as the full title of the work suggests;” R. Cross, “Individual Natures in the Christology of Leontius of Byzantium,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 10 (2002) 245–

“the headless one” of the *Solutio* “really speaks for Severus.”⁵ It is not the case, however. As Marcel Richard has shown, the Acephalus is a collective image of Severianist critics of Leontius’ previous work *Contra Nestorianos et Eutychianos* (CPG 6813) [= *CNE*].⁶ Marcel Richard believed that Leontius’ audience was here neo-Chalcedonian rather than properly Severianist: “Léonce ne nous dit pas, en effet, qu’il a été repris par les monophysites ; mais que beaucoup de gens ont trouvé son système peu efficace contre le monophysisme et lui ont reproché d’avoir négligé certaines objections de ces hérétiques ;” then, Richard concluded that Leontius’ interlocutor is “un néo-chalcédonien.”⁷

I, for one, once proposed to identify the Acephalus with John Philoponus (regardless of whether Philoponus did criticize *CNE* or not) – however, with no proper explanation of historical circumstances and without appropriate reservations.⁸ I was then sharing Michel van Esbroeck’s conviction that the *De Sectis* (CPG 6823) with its polemics against Philoponus is a work by Leontius of Byzantium and is to be dated to the period from 543 to 551.⁹ However, now I am convinced by Uwe Lang’s criticism of van Esbroeck’s analysis and reestablishment of the traditional, for the twentieth-century scholarship, date of the *De Sectis*, between 580 and 608, which precludes its attribution to Leontius of Byzantium.¹⁰ Therefore, after having excluded the *De Sectis* from

365, here 254. This remark in Cross’ mouth is especially odd, because Cross himself provides a long note (255, n. 29) dealing with difference between Acephalus’ and Severus’ positions and, then, calls Acephalus “the [fictitious?] Severan opponent of Leontius” (259; square brackets by Cross).

5. A. Grillmeier with Th. Hainthaler, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. 2/2: *The Church of Constantinople in the Sixth Century*, tr. P. Allen, J. Cawte, London: Mowbray, Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press 1995 [original publ. 1989], 193.
6. Thus Marcel Richard in his decisive criticisms of Loofs’ argumentation: “Contre cette hypothèse nous pouvons alléguer le fait que Léonce s’adresse toujours à ses adversaires au pluriel (col. 1916C, 1937A)”; moreover, Richard put forward chronological reasons against the very possibility of a direct polemic against Severus by Leontius; M. Richard, “Léonce de Byzance était-il origéniste?”, *Revue des études byzantines* 5 (1947) 31–66 (repr. *idem*, *Opera minora*, t. 2, Turnhout : Brepols 1976, Nr 57), here 58, esp. n. 2.
7. M. Richard, “Léonce...”, 58–59, here 58.
8. В. М. Лурье, при участии В. А. Баранова, *История византийской философии. Формативный период* [В. Lourié, with a participation of V. Baranov, *The History of the Byzantine Philosophy. The Formative Period*], St Petersburg: Axioma, 2006 [thereafter IVF], 334–348; a Serbian translation available: В. Лурје уз сарадњу В. А. Баранова, *Историја византијске философије. Формативни период*. Превела с руског Јелена Капустина. Сремски Карловци, Нови Сад: Издавачка књижарница Зорана Стојановића 2010.
9. M. van Esbroeck, “Le ‘De Sectis’ attribué à Léonce de Byzance (CPG 6823) dans la version géorgienne d’Arsène Iqaltoeli”, *Bedi Kartlisa* 42 (1984) 35–42, and *idem*, “La date et l’auteur du ‘De Sectis’ attribué à Léonce de Byzance,” in: C. Laga, J. A. Munitiz, L. Van Rompay, eds., *After Chalcedon. Studies in Theology and Church History offered to Professor Albert Van Roey for His Seventieth Birthday*, Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 18, Leuven: Peeters 1985, 415–424.
10. U. M. Lang, “The Date of the Treatise ‘De Sectis’ Revisited,” *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 29 (1998) 89–98. The most convincing part of Lang’s argumentation is, to my opinion, chronology of publication of Philoponus’ “tritheistic” works criticized in the *De Sectis*. I am unaware of van Esbroeck’s reaction to this paper.

consideration, we have no direct evidence for any discussion between Leontius of Byzantium and John Philoponus. This is not to say, however, that such a discussion did not take place. Moreover, we still have a witness preserved by Germanos of Constantinople (early eighth century) that it was Leontius who answered Philoponus in defence of the Council of Chalcedon; Germanos, however, means the whole work of Leontius rather than any specific treatise.¹¹ Germanos’ source is unknown.

Thus, the question about possible direct polemics between Philoponus and Leontius could be reopened. I have nothing to object against Richard’s conclusion that Leontius aimed at a (neo-)Chalcedonian audience, but my point is that this audience was especially alarmed by John Philoponus’ unifying idea which has been proposed on the eve of the Constantinopolitan Council of 553. In this sense, the prototype of the Acephalus is John Philoponus as the author of the *Arbiter*.

2. *The Solutio: Problems of Dating*

From the text of the *Solutio*, we know that it is a continuation of a previous work by Leontius, *CNE* (p. 77.3–15; 1916C). However, the general chronology of Leontius’ works – and his life as well – is not very precise. It heavily depends on our presuppositions concerning his identity with other personalities bearing the same name. I will try to avoid here using any suppositions going beyond the texts. Thus, we can follow the “common opinion” that *CNE* is datable to either the 530s¹² or early 540s (not later than 543), that is, before the Justinian’s decree against the “Three Chapters” (543 or early 544).¹³ This

11. Germanos of Constantinople in the *De haeresibus et synodis* (CPG 8020), ch. 33, says that Philoponus, μάλλον δὲ Ματαίοππος, “struggled against the Council” (κατὰ τῆς συνόδου ἠγωνίζετο) and “almost agreed with Origen in his teaching about resurrection” (μικροῦ καὶ τῷ Ὀριγένει συμπνέων εἰς τοὺς περὶ ἀναστάσεως λόγους); Leontius, however, “[...] composed a very appropriate book defending this Council and has written down in it many witnesses of the notion of duality [sc. of the natures in Christ], and this is why this book is called the *Leontia*” (Λεόντιος δὲ ὁ τῆς ἐρήμου μοναχὸς βιβλίον συνέθηκεν εὐαπόδεκτον, ὑπὲρ τῆς τοιαύτης συνόδου ἐνιστάμενος: πολλὰς δὲ μαρτυρίας ἐν αὐτῷ καταγράφας περὶ τῆς δίκης φωνῆς, ὅθεν καὶ Λεόντια τὸ βιβλίον ἐκ τούτου ἐκλήθη) (PG 98, 69C–72A). I proposed a reconstruction of Philoponus’ teaching on the resurrection in B. Lourié, “John Philoponus on the Bodily Resurrection,” *Scrinium* 9 (2013) 91–100; an enlarged Russian translation: B. M. Лурье, “Идентичность человеческой личности по Иоанну Филопону: физическое тело в пространстве и человеческое тело по воскресении [The Identity of the Human Personality according to John Philoponus: the Physical Body in the Space and the Human Body after the Resurrection],” *Εἶνα. Проблемы Философии и Θεολογίας* 1, 1 (2012) 307–339; the relevant pages of IVF (243–248) contain my earlier erroneous views.
12. Thus Daley and almost the whole previous scholarship, although with important exceptions (see the next note): “[...] its [CNE’s] content seems to belong best in the heated theological atmosphere of the 530s;” B. Daley, *Leontius*, xxxii–xxxiii, here xxxiii.
13. Marcel Richard opts for the exact date just before the decree against the “Three Chapters,” 543; M. Richard, “Léonce...,” 50–53 *et passim*, whereas David Evans accepts the interval from 540 to 543; D. B. Evans, *Leontius of Byzantium: An Origenist Christology*, Dumbarton Oaks Studies 13, Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine studies 1970, 2–3.

dating, “prior to 544,” seems to me results from the text of *CNE* without any particular assumption concerning the identity of Leontius. However, dealing with the *Solutio*, we have nothing except this *terminus post quem*. *A priori*, it is unclear whether Leontius wrote his *Solutio* soon after publication of *CNE* or that he revisited his polemics after having several years spent.

Thus, for the *Solutio*, our main *terminus ante quem* is the date of the death of Leontius – which is, unfortunately, unknown. Anyway, it is within the limits of probability that he was still alive and active, at least, for about one decade beyond the early 540s, that is, up to the time of the Second Council of Constantinople (553). This decade is to be defined as the most probable time of composition of the *Solutio*.

3. The Polemical Context

The author of the *Solutio* needs to explain, throughout the whole of his treatise, why the “one composite hypostasis” of the Chalcedonians does not mean the same as the “one composite nature” of the anti-Chalcedonians. This eternal polemical motive between the partisans and the adversaries of the Council of Chalcedon is interpreted, in *this* work of Leontius – not in *CNE* – quite unusually: Leontius tries to explain the difference between the notions of hypostasis and *particular* nature, because he does admit, from the very beginning, that the humanity of Christ is not a general nature but a particular one. This is neither the common opinion of the Chalcedonian authors nor Leontius’ own attitude in *CNE*. This feature of the *Solutio* passed scarcely noticed by the patristic scholars, with a unique and important exception of Richard Cross.¹⁴ At least, nobody realised here the fact of a radical deviation from the Chalcedonian tradition, already established in the epoch of Leontius and being perpetuated by Maximus the Confessor and the Christological doctrines of the defenders of the holy icons in the ninth century.

From the early sixth century, and then again, from the early ninth century onwards we see Chalcedonian Orthodoxy insisting that the Logos became incarnated in the common nature of humankind. This was certainly taken to be the *consensus patrum* already in the eighth century, because, in

14. See R. Cross, “Individual Natures...,” Before him, this fact had been first noticed – but left without any substantial analysis – by M. Richard, “Léonce de Jérusalem et Léonce de Byzance,” *Mélanges de science religieuse* 1 (1944) 35–88, here 60–61; repr. in *idem*, *Opera minora*, t. 3, Turnhout: Brepols 1977, Nr 59], and, then, was briefly analysed by A. Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. 2/2, 189–193, but see Cross’ criticism of the latter (R. Cross, “Individual Natures...”, 246–247), which I consider quite justified (not to say that the whole context of this later Leontius’ Christology needs to be studied in the context of Philoponus and Eutychius of Constantinople, see below). Brian Daley has tried to show that even in *CNE* Leontius held the same opinion about the nature of Christ as in the *Solutio* (B. Daley, “A Richer Union: Leontius of Byzantium and the Relationship of Human and Divine in Christ,” *Studia Patristica* 24 (1993) 239–265, here 248–252), but his argumentation is convincingly criticised by R. Cross, “Individual Natures...,” 248–250; cf. also my analysis in the next section.

the early ninth century, we see this postulate as the common ground of both iconoclastic and anti-iconoclastic theologies. Moreover, we see the same idea already in Maximus the Confessor in the seventh century. However, in general, the situation in the sixth and seventh centuries was different, and not without the participation of Leontius of Byzantium.¹⁵

Near 519, we see Severus of Antioch writing against a Chalcedonian, Sergius the Grammarian (*Contra impium Grammaticum*).¹⁶ Sergius, in his polemical work in defence of the Council of Chalcedon (written in the 510s, now available through Severus’ quotation only) mentioned that the Logos was incarnated into the common nature of humankind. This point becomes a subject of a long refutation on the part of Severus – although still somewhere on the margin of the polemic. Severus’ point was a *reductio ad absurdum*: if the humanity of the Christ is the common nature of the whole humankind, then, the Logos is incarnated not into a particular human, Jesus, but into everybody.¹⁷

Unfortunately, we don’t know whether this refutation by Severus was, in turn, addressed by somebody from the Chalcedonian camp. In the middle of the same (sixth) century, we see, however, that the contrary opinion is shared by such Chalcedonians as our Leontius and patriarch Eutychius of Constantinople (552–565, 577–582, one of the key theological figures of this epoch).¹⁸

There was an established tradition, going back to the understanding of “particular nature” in the *Isagoge* of Porphyry, of equating this term with the Christian notion of hypostasis.¹⁹ Richard Cross, in his very valuable article on Leontius, argues that there was as well another tradition, represented at

15. For an outline of the relevant doctrines, see IVF.

16. P. Allen, C. T. R. Hayward, *Severus of Antioch*, London, New York: Routledge 2004, 44–46.

17. I. Lebon, *Severi Antiocheni Liber contra impium Grammaticum, Oratio prima et secunda*, CSCO, vols. 111–112; Scr. Syri, tt. 58–59 (Ser. IV, t. IV), Paris: E typographeo republicae 1938, 166–172/130–134 (txt/tr.). The title of the corresponding chapter II, 18: “Investigatio confutationis clare significans hanc assertionem: ‘Christus est in duabus substantiis secundum commune substantiae significationem (ἁπλοῦς καὶ ἁπλοῦς)’ ad stultissimam ducere blasphemiam, scilicet ad id, quod sancta Trinitas toti humanitatis generi incarnata censeatur” (166/130). The next two chapters (II, 19–20) are dedicated to the same topic (*ibid.*, 172–179/134–139). Insisting that, in Christ, there is neither human nature nor hypostasis, Severus avoids any precisising of his own understanding of the notion of particular nature.

18. For Eutychus of Constantinople in his historical context, especially his dependency on theological views of Philopon, see B. Lourié, “Un autre monothélisme : le cas de Constantin d’Apamée au VI^e Concile Œcuménique,” *Studia Patristica* 29 (1997) 290–303; *idem*, “Le second iconoclisme en recherche de la vraie doctrine,” *Studia Patristica* 34 (2000) 145–169, and IVF, *passim*, but esp. 261–267.

19. Cf. IVF, *passim*, but esp. 524–525, where I mention the recent discussion between J.-Cl. Larchet and D. Bathrellos, which seems to me now finished with the review of Bathrellos’ monograph *The Byzantine Christ. Person, Nature, and Will in the Christology of Saint Maxim the Confessor*, Oxford 2004 by Larchet, *Revue d’histoire ecclésiastique* 101/102 (2006) 182–185, 359; see here the further bibliography. Bathrellos’ idea that, according to Maximus the Confessor, the human nature of Christ is allegedly a particular one, is disproved by Larchet as well as by the evidence referred to in IVF.

least, by John of Damascus and Leontius in the *Solutio*, assuming the existence of “individual natures.” Cross coined the latter term himself referring to John of Damascus’ and Leontius’ definitions of the natures ἐν ἀτόμῳ.²⁰

Cross proposes a distinction between the “particular natures” (φύσεις μερικαί) – which, indeed, do not exist, according to the Chalcedonians, including both John of Damascus and Leontius – and “individual natures,” which are not the same thing as the hypostases and which do really exist – at least, according to John and Leontius in the *Solutio*. The “particular natures” are produced as an abstraction from the hypostases when their individual characteristics are taken off, whereas the “individual natures” preserve their individual characteristics without being identical to the hypostases.

I have to note that Cross’ explanation is hardly acceptable even for John of Damascus: it is normally held that John’s “individual natures” are another term for the hypostases and so far there is hardly one other scholar who would follow Cross’ understanding. Moreover, Cross’ interpretation of this term in John of Damascus remained unknown to the later generations of Chalcedonian theologians, including Nicephorus of Constantinople and Theodore the Studite, who were dealing with the problem of the humanity of Christ. And a further question remains, namely why it is not a hypostasis if it contains hypostatic characteristics of a human person, Jesus?²¹ This is a powerful argument to assume that Cross’ interpretation was unknown to John of Damascus himself as well.

Anyway, in the interpretation of Leontius’ *Solutio*, Cross (and those before him) overlooked the very key moment. In my opinion, Leontius in the *Solutio* conceded to his Severianist adversary in the acknowledgement of the “particular natures,” but gave this notion a very specific interpretation.

4. A New Understanding of “(Particular) Nature”

From the very beginning of the dialogue, Leontius’ *alter ego*, the Orthodox, acknowledges that the human nature in Christ is a particular nature. The dialogue starts with the following “objection of the Acephalus:” “The human nature which the Logos received, was it that which is considered in the species or in an individual?” (ch. 1; p. 77.16–17; 1916D–1917A: Ἀντίθεσις Ἀκεφάλου: Φύσιν ὁ Λόγος ἀναλαβὼν ἀνθρωπίνην, τὴν ἐν τῷ εἶδει θεωρουμένην ἢ τὴν ἐν ἀτόμῳ ἀνέλαβεν;).

The Orthodox, at first, asks whether there is a difference between these two kinds of natures (77.18–19; 1917A). The Acephalus answers that, indeed, there is a difference: one is considered in a plurality, whereas another in the

20. R. Cross, “Individual Natures...,” 251–265; cf. his earlier paper, *idem*, “Perichoresis, Deification, and Christological Predication in John of Damascus,” *Mediaeval Studies* 62 (2000) 69–124.

21. For a detailed review of these ninth-century doctrines on hypostasis, as well as their sixth-century forerunner, Eulogius of Alexandria, see B. Lourie, “Le second iconoclasme...”

unique number” (77.20; 1917A: [...] ἡ μὲν ἐν πλήθει θεωρεῖται, ἡ δὲ ἐν ἐνὶ τῷ ἀριθμῷ). The Orthodox tries to explain that, in both cases, the nature is the same, regardless of whether it is considered in a unique individual or in a plurality (77.11–78.5; 1917AB) – in the same manner as the same white colour (ἡ λευκότης) could be considered in either a unique instance or in a plurality of objects (εἴτε ἐν εἴτε πλείονα) (77.21–27; 1917A).

The Acephalus, however, needs to obtain an unequivocal answer: “Thus, [Christ] received a particular nature? (Τὴν τινὰ οὖν ἀνέλαβε φύσιν;)” – “Yes, but one that is the same as the species (Ναὶ· ἀλλὰ τὴν αὐτὴν οὖσαν τῷ εἶδει),” answers the Orthodox. This answer allows to the Acephalus to pose his main question: “But what is the difference between this and the hypostasis? (Τί δὲ παρὰ ταύτην ἡ ὑπόστασις;)” (78.6–8; 1917B). The whole treatise then turns out to be the answer of the Orthodox.

Let us recall what we would have been prepared to hear from the Leontius known to us from CNE: “there could be no nature, that is, essence, without a hypostasis;” a hypostasis is a nature, but not *vice versa*: a nature is not a hypostasis; “the nature has meaning of being, whereas the hypostasis has also that of separate being; the former has the meaning of species, whereas the latter reveals the particular [...] The definition of the hypostasis is either what is the same according to nature but different according to number, or what is composed of different natures but has the communion of being together and in each other.”²²

Briefly, we could expect from Leontius the answer that the hypostasis produces a difference in number, that is, the difference of physical objects, whereas the nature does not produce such a difference. The real answer of Leontius is somewhat strange: “[The hypostasis differs from the particular nature in that] the participation in it produces a different [object], and not a difference (“Ὅτι τὸ μετέχειν αὐτῆς ἄλλον ποιεῖ, οὐκ ἄλλοιον”) (78.9; 1917B). Acephalus’ first reaction is to check whether the Orthodox changed the traditional definition of the hypostasis – but he did not. Instead, the Orthodox basically confirmed Acephalus’ understanding of the hypostasis applied to the humanity of Christ (in Acephalus’ wording, that “the humanity of Christ is separated from the common [humanity] with the differentiating characteristics”²³).

If the traditional understanding of hypostasis as a particular being remains unchallenged, then, according to the Acephalus, his opponent has to

22. Ἀνυπόστατος μὲν οὖν φύσις, τουτέστιν οὐσία, οὐκ ἂν εἶη ποτέ· οὐ μὴν ἡ φύσις ὑπόστασις, ὅτι μηδὲ ἀντιστρέφει. Ἡ μὲν γὰρ ὑπόστασις καὶ φύσις, ἡ δὲ φύσις οὐκέτι καὶ ὑπόστασις· ἡ μὲν γὰρ φύσις τὸν τοῦ εἶναι λόγον ἐπιδέχεται· ἡ δὲ ὑπόστασις, καὶ τὸν τοῦ καθ’ ἑαυτὸ εἶναι· καὶ ἡ μὲν εἶδους λόγον ἐπέχει, ἡ δὲ τοῦ τινός ἐστι δηλωτικὴ [...] ὑποστάσεως δὲ ὅρος ἢ τὰ κατὰ τὴν φύσιν μὲν ταῦτά, ἀριθμῷ δὲ διαφέροντα, ἢ τὰ ἐκ διαφορῶν φύσεων συνεστῶτα, τὴν δὲ τοῦ εἶναι κοινωνίαν ἅμα τε καὶ ἐν ἀλλήλοις κεκτημένα [...] (CNE I, 1; 9.3–14; 1280AB).

23. Οὐκ ἦν οὖν τοῖς ἀφοριστικοῖς ἰδιώμασιν ἡ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἀνθρωπότης τοῦ κοινου τοῦ ἴδιου αὐτοῦ χωρίζουσα; (78.13–14; 1917C); cf. 78.15–26; 1917CD.

acknowledge that the particular nature shares with the hypostasis its most obvious feature, namely, the producing of numerical difference. Thus, he asks (this question opens ch. 2 of the *Solutio*): “But do you really say that, although the hypostasis reveals the divided and self-standing, the number, and especially the number two, means something different from that? Because any number (consists) in the quantity, and only the one is non-quantitative. However, even if to the one (belongs) the non-quantitativity and because of this it is individual, to the two and any other number (belong) the quantity and the divisibility.”²⁴

Leontius as we know him from *CNE* would have nothing to object. Indeed, in *CNE*, I.4, he said:

One can discover that things of different species join in relationships with things of the same species in varying ways: for in respects in which things of like species are joined with things of different species, they differ towards each other; and in the respects in which they differ from things of different species, they are joined to each other. For they are distinguished from each other but joined to things of other species by *number*, and they are joined to each other but distinguished from things of other species by *definition* (τῶ μὲν γὰρ ἀριθμῶ πρὸς ἑαυτὰ διακρινόμενα, τοῖς ἑτεροειδέσι συνάπτεται· τῶ δὲ ὄρω πρὸς ἑαυτὰ συναπτόμενα, τῶν ἑτεροειδῶν διακέκριται) (14.25–15.4; 1285D–1288A).²⁵

Thus, Leontius (“the Orthodox”) would have to choose between only two kinds of distinction: “by number” and “by definition.” The former is applicable to the hypostases, the latter to the natures. If the human individuality of Jesus was different “by number” from other human hypostases, then, his humanity is a separate hypostasis, and this regardless of the Chalcedonians’ efforts to cover their crypto-Nestorianism. If it is different only “by definition,” then one has to acknowledge that the humanity of Christ is a separate particular nature – which further would be easy to present as a constitutive component of the composite μία φύσις τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγου σεσαρκομένη in a Severianist sense. Both Leontius and his opponent would not allow any φύσις ἀνυπόστατος (“a nature without hypostasis:”) the particular nature of Jesus’ humanity would be confined, together with the nature of divinity, within the hypostasis of the Logos.

The real amplitude of problem could be realised from the further Christological discussions in Byzantium, starting from the Christological contents

24. Ἄλλ’ ἐκεῖνο οὐκ ἂν εἴποις, ὡς ἡ μὲν ὑπόστασις τὸ διηρημένον καὶ καθ’ ἑαυτὸ ὑπάρχον δηλοῖ, ὁ δὲ ἀριθμὸς, καὶ μάλιστα τῆς δυάδος, ἄλλο τι παρὰ τοῦτο σημαίνει; Πᾶς γὰρ ἀριθμὸς ἐν ποσότητι, μονὰς δὲ μόνῃ ἄποσον· εἰ δὲ τῆς μονάδος τὸ ἄποσον καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἄτομον, δυάδος ἄρα καὶ παντὸς ἀριθμοῦ τὸ ποσὸν καὶ διηρημένον (78.27–31; 1917D–1920A).

25. B. Daley’s tr.: “A Richer Union’...,” 251. Italics by Daley.

of the second quarrel on the holy icons in the ninth century onwards.²⁶ The simultaneous application of the two conditions – the presence of the hypostatic characteristics of Jesus in the humanity of Christ together with the absence of any human hypostasis in this humanity – turned out to be logically paraconsistent, as Eulogius of Alexandria (late sixth century) warned in advance at the beginning of the discussion, when it was only one hundred years old. This is one of the key problems of the Orthodox dogmatics where the Fathers had recourse to the paraconsistent logic (as it had been called since the 1970s: a logic which does not avoid the contradictions but relies on them).²⁷ Leontius of Byzantium remained outside of this non-classical mainstream of patristic logical thought in Christology. His personal contribution, although unaccepted by further tradition and never going beyond classical logic, is nevertheless most interesting from the viewpoint of the history of both mathematics and cognitive science.

Leontius (“the Orthodox”) surprises his opponent with an idea that has never been heard before or after him,²⁸ namely, there is a third kind of distinction or, more precisely, the second kind of distinction “by number.”

5. *The Second Kind of Numerical Distinction: “by Relation” (ἐν σχέσει)*

Now we arrived to the moment when we have to read carefully the part of Leontius’ text (*Solutio*, 2) which is mostly overlooked by the scholars. And I must apologize for such a long quotation from a monologue of the Orthodox (79.1–23; 1920BC).

Ὁὐκοῦν ἐπειδὴ ἀριθμοῦ καὶ τῶν περὶ Surely then, if you have recalled the number and its features, it is necessary to say
αὐτὸν ἰδιωμάτων ἐμνήθης, ἀναγκα-
βερ and its features, it is necessary to say
ἴον ἐκεῖνο εἰπεῖν, ὡς ἀριθμὸς διττὸς that “number” could be said in two meanings.
λέγεται, ὁ μὲν τις ἀπλῶς καὶ καθ’ ἑαυ- One meaning is somewhat simple and *per se*,
τὸν, ὁ δὲ ἐν σχέσει καὶ πράγμασι θε- whereas another is considered in relationship

26. See, e.g., B. Lourié, “Le second iconoclisme...”; *idem*, “Une dispute sans justes : Léon de Chalcédoine, Eustrate de Nicée et la troisième querelle sur les images sacrées,” *Studia Patristica* 42 (2006) 321–339; *idem*, “Michel Psellos contre Maxime le Confesseur : l’origine de l’ ‘hérésie des physéthésites”’, *Scrinium* 4 (2008) 201–227.

27. There is, so far, no comprehensive introduction to the paraconsistent logics in the Fathers. As a first sketch, one can see B. Lourié, “The Philosophy of Dionysius the Areopagite: An Approach to Intensional Semantics,” in: T. Nutsbidze, C. B. Horn, B. Lourié, with the Collaboration of A. Ostrovsky, *Georgian Christian Thought and Its Cultural Context. Memorial Volume for the 125th Anniversary of Shalva Nutsbidze (1888–1969)*, Texts and Studies in Eastern Christianity 2, Leiden, Boston: Brill 2014, 81–127. The paraconsistent logical constructions were formed from the classical “blocks” in the same manner as, in the Quantum physics, the non-classical phenomena are described in classical terms used according to Niels Bohr’s “correspondence principle.” Thus, even a correct study of these “blocks” taken alone, that is, regardless of the theological intuition they serve to express, would not allow one to grasp the paraconsistent way of thinking.

28. It could be likely that the same idea was implied by Eutychius of Constantinople, but our data are too scarce to judge; cf. B. Lourié, “Un autre monothéisme...”

ωρούμενος, ὡσπερ λευκὸν ἢ τε λευκότης καὶ τὸ λευκασμένον. Αὐτὴ τοίνυν ἢ φύσις τοῦ ἀριθμοῦ καθ' ἑαυτὴν οὔτε συνάπτει οὔτε διαιρεῖ, οὐδὲ γὰρ ἔχει ὑποκείμενα πράγματα· ἀλλ' ὡσπερ τὸ ἄνω καὶ τὸ κάτω πρὸς τὴν σχέσιν λέγεται τοῦ ἀναβαίνοντος ἢ καταβαίνοντος, αὐτὸ δὲ ἀπολύτως λεγόμενον οὐδ' ὀπότερον ἔστιν ὅτι καὶ ἀμφοτέρα δέχεται, καὶ ἄνω μὲν ὡς πρὸς κάτω, κάτω δὲ ὡς πρὸς τὸ ἄνω λέγεται, ἀφορίζεται δὲ τῇ τοῦ ἀνιόντος καὶ κατερχομένου σχέσει, οὕτως καὶ ὁ ἀριθμὸς αὐτὸς καθ' ἑαυτὸν οὔτε διαιρεῖ οὔτε συναπτεῖ, ἀλλ' ἀμφοτέρα δέχεται τῇ ποιᾷ σχέσει, οἷον ἢ δυὰς, ἢ τετράς, καὶ ἐξῆς. Εἰ μὲν γὰρ τὰς μονάδας αὐτὰς θεωρεῖς ἐξ ὧν συνέστηκεν, εἰς ταύτας διαιρεῖται· εἰ δὲ τὴν ὁμάδα τούτων σκοπεῖς, ἐκ τούτων συνάπτεται. Δύο γὰρ καὶ δύο, εἰ τύχοι, εἰς τέσσαρα συντίθεται, τὰ δὲ τέσσαρα εἰς δύο καὶ δύο διαιρεῖται· ὥστε παντὸς ἀληθέστερον τὴν φύσιν τοῦ ἀριθμοῦ μηδὲν ἀφωρισμένον ἔχειν, μήτε τὸ διηρημένον μήτε τὸ ἠνωμένον, ἐν δὲ τῇ τῶν πραγμάτων ἐπιπλοκῇ καὶ συνθέσει τοῦτο ὑφίστασθαι.

and in things – in the same manner as “white” is said about either the white paint or a thing painted white. Thus, the nature of number itself is *per se* neither joining nor dividing, because it does not contain real things as subjects. However, in the same manner as “up” and “down” are defined in relationship to the ascending or the descending, but when they are said unconditionally, they are nothing of the two, because they can be understood in both senses, and “up” is defined in relation to “down,” whereas “down” in relation to “up,” and they are to be discerned in relationship to the ascending and descending, – in the same manner the number, too, is itself and *per se* neither dividing nor joining but contain both in a certain relationship, such as the two, the four, etc. Because if you consider the units they are composed from, they are divided into them, whereas if you see them as a whole, they are collected from them. Thus, two and two, taken together, result into four, whereas four could be divided into two and two. It is thus the most true to take the nature of number as defined in no way, neither as divided nor as united, but existing in one or another way depending on its combination and composition with the real things.

Ἀπαιδευτον οὖν τὸ τῇ φύσει τοῦ ἀριθμοῦ ἀναγκαίως τὴν διαίρεσιν τῶν πραγμάτων ἔπεσθαι νομοθετεῖν, ἀλλὰ μὴ τῇ τῶν πραγμάτων ἠνωμένων τε ἢ διηρημένων φύσει τὸν ἀριθμὸν σημεῖον ποιεῖσθαι δηλωτικὸν τοῦ πόσου τῶν ὑποκειμένων, ἄλλου λόγου καὶ οὐ τοῦ ἀριθμοῦ ταῦτα διαιροῦντός τε καὶ συνάπτοντος [...]

Thus, it would be uneducated to take as a law that the nature of number is necessarily followed by a division in the real things, instead of making the number a sign of real things either united or divided by nature, revealing the quantity of subjects which are able to be divided or joined together because of a different reason than the number [...]

Here we can take a break to evaluate what has been said so far. The numbers and their corresponding subjects (τὰ ὑποκείμενα) can correspond to two different kinds of reality: not only to the number of mutually divided real things but also to the number of different *positions* within a unique real thing, such as “up” and “down” (“top” and “bottom”). In the latter case, the dif-

ferent positions can be defined only through each other, according to their mutual relationships.

In the following part of the same monologue, Leontius (the Orthodox) continues to explain his idea with different examples, e.g., a ten-cubit piece of wood, whose unity did not undergo any division into ten different pieces (79.26–28; 1920C). A horse, a human, and a bull represent three different natures, but they are not divided according to quantity (κατὰ τὸ ποσόν) but are different according to species (τὸ παρηλλαγμένον κατὰ τὸ εἶδος). He goes on to say, however, that “[...] concerning three different men, such as Peter, Paul, and John, we would imply that they are divided and, moreover, that such is their amount (τρεις δὲ ἀνθρώπους, εἰ τύχοι, Πέτρον καὶ Παῦλον καὶ Ἰωάννην, τὸ διηρημένον αὐτῶν μᾶλλον καὶ ὅτι τοσοῦτοι οὗτοι οἶδε παριστῶμεν)” (79.31–80.4; 1920D).

Oddly enough, Leontius’ distinction between the two kinds of numbers and numerical difference passed unnoticed by the scholars who analysed the *Solutio* – despite the obvious fact that this is the central point of Leontius’ explanation of his understanding of the particular nature.

6. Triadological Implications

Then, Leontius reaches the most delicate domain of “theology,” that is, Trinitarian doctrine (θεολογία, in contrast with οἰκονομία/“oeconomy” as the doctrine of incarnation). The Acephalus will answer with an attendant argument of the anti-Chalcedonians that the meaning of such terms as “hypostasis,” “nature,” and “essence” must not be the same in the “oeconomy” as in the “theology” (80.22–26; 1921B). This part of the discussion focused on the patristic *testimonia* is not especially original, and so, will be out of our scope.²⁹ We need to read, however, in the light of the above explanation, the Trinitarian idea of Leontius (80.4–10; 1920D–1921A):

Ὡσπερ ἐπὶ τῆς ἁγίας Τριάδος Thus, concerning the Holy Trinity, we confess
τρεις μὲν ὑποστάσεις ὁμολογο- three hypostases, but we profess as unique their
ῦμεν, μίαν δὲ τούτων φύσιν καὶ nature and essence, without, however, acknow-
οὐσίαν καταγγέλομεν, οὐδ’ ὅπο- ledging any of them as having no being, because
τέραν μὲν τούτων ἀνούσιον γι- we do not define the number as a delimitation
νώσκοντες, οὐ μὲν καὶ ἀριθμὸν of quantity of essences, knowing well that, to-
ἀφοριστικὸν ποσότητος οὐσιῶν gether with the latter, the (idea of the) different
ἐπιφημίζοντες, εἴ εἰδότες τὸ essence is to be introduced – as, indeed, the Arians
ἐτερούσιον ταύτη συνάγεσθαι ὁ effectuated, when they, dealing with the hypo-
δὴ καὶ οἱ Ἀρειανοὶ συναισθόμε- stases that have their essence, introduced the (no-
νοι, ταῖς ὑποστάσεσιν, ἐνουσί- tion of) essence into the definition of hypostasis

29. It occupies the whole ch. 3 of the *Solutio* (80.22–83.16; 1921B–1925B). This topic continued to be discussed in ch. 6 (85.9–86.14; 1928D–1929D).

οις οὔσαις, τὰς οὐσίας ἐπεφήμιζον, ταύτη τὸ ἕτεροούσιον ity] a complication with the (idea of the) different συμπλέκοντες, essence.

At the end of the quotation, my translation becomes more verbose and explicative, but I hope to grasp Leontius' idea adequately. Leontius says that the three hypostases are, indeed, existing and real, but they are different from each other in the same "numerical" but "relational" sense just as "up" differs from "down." This difference between the divine hypostases is opposed to the example of three really divided men, Peter, Paul, and John, which has just been referred to. Thus, Leontius would be certainly opposed to the future "Tritheism" of John Philoponus.

It is implied – in Leontius unlike Philoponus – that there is some real object, the common nature, that is divided into particular natures differentiated by their "position." This kind of difference implies that the different objects (particular natures within the unique common nature) differ exclusively in relation to each other. Applied to the Trinity, this approach leads to a certain kind of Modalism rather than "Tritheism."³⁰

It is in such a "Modalist" sense that, I think, one has to understand Leontius' earlier triadological formulation:

For the nature of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is not fulfilling [or: completing – οὐ γὰρ συμπληρωτική], so that it would be more in the one than in the three. In fact, by nature, the Trinity is the same as any one of those which are seen in the Trinity ([...] ὡς οὖν μᾶλλον ἐν τῷ ἐνὶ ἡ ἐν τοῖς τρισί· καὶ τοῦτο τῇ φύσει ἡ Τριάς, ὅπερ ἂν ἔν τι τῶν ἐν Τριάδι θεωρουμένων τυγχάνοι) [...]³¹

30. Therefore, Loofs was not right in his claim that "[u]nser Verfasser selbst würde bei tritheistischen Konsequenzen ankommen, wenn er der Anwendung seiner philosophischen Gedanken auf die Trinitätslehre noch genauer nachginge" (F. Loofs, *Leontius von Byzanz...*, 63), which has been pointed out by R. Cross, "Individual Natures...", 260, n. 44. However, Cross' own understanding of Leontius ("[...] Leontius never abandons his belief that natures are universals; his point about Christ's human nature is that it has the universal human nature as a part;" *ibid.*) is not quite correct, because to be numerically differentiated "by relation" within a unity is not the same thing as to be a part of this unity. In the field of "Theology," Cross summarises the passage of the *Solutio* quoted above in a not quite correct way: "The Arian worry is circumvented by claiming that, although the three divine persons are not natures or essences, none is *anousios* – each divine person has the one divine nature," and continues in a footnote: "This is, of course, precisely the move made by Philoponus a few years later" (*ibid.*, 259, n. 42); the mention of Philoponus refers to his "Tritheism." Unlike Philoponus, however, Leontius does not allow any individualisation of the hypostases of the Trinity other than their relations to each other. This idea has something in common with the Scholasticism but is alien to the Byzantine patristic tradition; cf. a discussion of a "relational" understanding of the notion of hypostasis at the Council of Florence in 1439; B. Lourie, "L'attitude de S. Marc d'Ephèse aux débats sur la procession du Saint-Esprit à Florence. Ses fondements dans la théologie post-palmitique," *Annuaire Historiae Conciliorum* 21 (1989) 317–333.

31. *CNE I*, 4; 15.14–17; 1288B; tr. by István Perczel, "Once Again on Dionysius the Areopagite and Leontius of Byzantium," in: T. Boiadjev, G. Kapriev, A. Speer, eds., *Die Dionysius-Rezeption im*

Here, the identity of any one hypostasis with the whole Trinity remains unexplained,³² but the new idea of the numerical difference "by relation" provides a strong rational foundation to it. If I dare to call such a decision modalistic, I have in mind a "Modalism" in a very specific sense: it recognises a specific but true reality of the objects whose numerical distinction is only "relational."³³ Nevertheless, Leontius' "Modalism," too, avoids the patristic paraconsistent logic with its famous equation " $1 = 3$ " and the corresponding mathematical ideas with whom the modern thought became accustomed only after Richard Dedekind's and Georg Cantor's theory of infinite sets.³⁴

7. Leontius' Theory of Graphs

The "numbers" defined through relation to each other are known in the modern mathematics as graphs. The very idea of the modern theory of graphs goes back directly to Leibniz's *geometria situs*, although Leibniz himself saw its roots in some "Veteres" (scholars of Greek antiquity, especially Euclid) and even Descartes.³⁵ According to the earliest of Leibniz's formulations, there are two different approaches in the mathematical analysis: "[...] je croy qu'il nous faut encor une autre analyse proprement geometrique ou lineaire, qui nous exprime directement *situm*, comme l'Algebre exprime *magnitudinem*."³⁶ In Leibniz's *geometria situs*, both modern theory of graphs and

Mittelalter: Internationales Kolloquium in Sofia vom 8. bis 11. April 1999 unter der Schirmherrschaft der Société internationale pour l'étude de la philosophie médiévale, Rencontres de Philosophie Médiévale 9, Turnhout: Brepols 2000, 41–85, here 54.

32. For the whole context and especially the following quotation from Dionysius, in Leontius, which is posed by him in a different context to distort its meaning, see Perczel, "Once Again..." Perczel's interpretation of Leontius seems to me very plausible, regardless of my sceptical attitude toward his interpretation of Dionysius.
33. Both historical and modern recensions of the Modalist Triadology operate with the unique – classical – kind of numerical distinction. See esp. the logical analysis by Daniele Bertini, "Una difesa della trattazione modalista della Trinità," in: D. Bertini, G. Salmeri, P. Trianni, eds., *La Trinità*, Roma: Edizione Nuova Cultura (forthcoming), and a larger article published on-line as preprint: "Che cosa non va nel modalismo?," in: *Elaborare l'esperienza di Dio*, Atti del Convegno "La Trinità", Roma 26–28 maggio 2009; <http://mondodamani.org/teologia/bertini2011.htm> (accessed on 25. 07. 2015).
34. There is no, so far, a comprehensive study of the paraconsistent logic in the patristic Triadology, but I have touched several related points in B. Lourié, "The Philosophy of Dionysius the Areopagite: An Approach..."
35. These references are given in Leibniz's programme article *De analysi situs* (ca 1693): G. H. Pertz, ed., *Leibnizens gesammelte Werke aus den Handschriften der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Hannover*, III. Folge, 5. Bd.: G. I. Gerhardt, *Leibnizens Mathematische Schriften*, II. Abt., Bd. 1. Halle: H. W. Schmidt 1858, 178–185. For a detailed analysis of Leibniz's historical context, see V. De Risi, *Geometry and Monadology. Leibniz's "Analysis Situs" and Philosophy of Space*, Science Networks. Historical Studies 33, Basel, Boston, Berlin: Birkhäuser 2007.
36. Letter to Christian Huygens, 8 September 1679: G. H. Pertz, ed., *Leibnizens gesammelte Werke...*, III. Folge, 2. Bd.: G. I. Gerhardt, *Leibnizens Mathematische Schriften*, I. Abt., Bd. 2., Berlin: A. Asher & Comp. 1850, 17–27, here 19. This is the first document marking the idea of the *geometria situs* as already presented in Leibniz's mind. As it has been shown only recently,

topology were still united.³⁷

The next and decisive step toward the theory of graphs was performed by Leonhard Euler in 1735, who kept in mind Leibniz's idea (and called it "etiamnum admodum ignotae" – "almost unknown, however").³⁸ Nevertheless, until Oswald Veblen in the 1930s, the theory of graphs has never been separated from the topology as a self-standing mathematical discipline.

In Leontius' example, the "top" (or "up") and "bottom" (or "down") are clearly two vertices of a graph acting as two different positions in the space. Even his example of a ten-cubit piece of wood is a demonstration of the possibility of an arbitrary spatial organization introduced into a given spatial zone.

A graph is, by definition, a representation of a set of objects, where some pairs of objects are connected by links (called edges) and the interconnected objects are represented by mathematical abstractions called vertices. Thus, the graphs are pure representations of mutual relations, and are thus identical with the numbers in Leontius' second meaning.

However, neither three men nor the three persons of the Holy Trinity and the two natures in Christ are related to a space in the ordinary sense of the word, that is, to a physical space. And yet, they too are vertices of graphs drawn in what we call now, after Peter Gärdenfors, "conceptual spaces."³⁹ This is a late twentieth-century idea also preconceived by Leontius that a spatial representation of information is inherent to the humanity. As Gärdenfors wrote, "I will advocate a third form of representing information that is based on using geometrical structures rather than symbols or connections between neurons. Using these structures *similarity* relations can be modelled in a natural way. The notion of similarity is crucial for the understanding of many cognitive phenomena. I shall call my way of representing information

Leibniz did not stop developing his new mathematical discipline until his death in 1716: cf. V. De Risi, *Geometry...*

37. One can additionally quote Leibniz from a recently published fragmentary text dated to 1682: "Geometria tractat de rerum magnitudine et figura. Itaque duabus scientiis subordinata est, uni de magnitudine in genere et magnitudinum comparatione sive aequalitate et ratione; alteri de rerum formis in genere sive de rerum similitudine et dissimilitudine"; V. De Risi, *Geometry...*, 623.
38. L. Euler, "Solutio problematis ad geometriam situs pertinentis", *Commentarii Academiae scientiarum Petropolitanae* 8 (1735) [published in 1741] 128–140; republished by L. G. du Pasquier, *Leonhard Euleri Opera omnia*: Ser. I, vol. 7: *Commentationes algebraicae ad theoriam combinatorum et probabilitatum pertinentes*, Leipzig: Teubner 1923, 1–10. Cf. reprint of du Pasquier's publication, English translation, and a discussion in the context of the modern theory of graphs in H. Fleischner, *Eulerian Graphs and Related Topics*, part 1, vol. 1, *Annals of Discrete Mathematics* 45, Amsterdam: Elsevier 1990.
39. See esp. his seminal monograph: P. Gärdenfors, *Conceptual Spaces: the Geometry of Thought*, Cambridge MA: MIT Press 2000, where the graphs in the conceptual spaces are discussed as well.

the *conceptual* form since I believe that the essential aspects of concept formation are best described using this kind of representation.”⁴⁰ Here the very wording, such as “geometrical structures” and “similarity relations,” sounds very Leibnizian [...]

Gärdenfors shows that the conceptual spaces should be dealt with using mathematical methods, including the theory of graphs. And the latter is the case with Leontius: his main innovation was not, of course, a spatial representation of the problems discussed, but in introducing a new and “relational” notion of number, which is nothing other than what we call now graphs – or, as Leibniz would say, not *magnitudo* but *situs*.

So far, historians of mathematics have not known of any precedent of the *geometria situs* before Leibniz. However, I would prefer to leave open the question whether Leontius himself discovered this new kind of mathematical object or borrowed this idea from somebody else. There are reasons to think that we are still far from a complete understanding of the progress in philosophy and scholarship achieved in the sixth-century Byzantium. Nevertheless, Leontius’ mathematical innovation in the theological discussion was produced out of the fear of logical inconsistency and, more precisely, in an attempt to avoid the recourse to the paraconsistent logic. Thus, in this general logical and theological inspiration, Leontius was in accord with his anti-Chalcedonian and Nestorian or crypto-Nestorian opponents, and therefore in disagreement with mainstream Byzantine patristic thought, both Cappadocian and Dionysian.

8. An Intermezzo: Forbidding the Singletons

The primary purpose of the following discussion in the *Solutio* is to explain why the humanity of Christ does not form a separate subject beside the Logos. There was no explanation *prêt-à-porter*. After having explained his own logical presuppositions (ch. 1–2) and having discussed the inevitable hermeneutical issues on some patristic sayings (ch. 3 and 6), Leontius, at first, completes an initial outline of his doctrine with an explanation – rather obvious in such context – of why “the unique composite nature” of the anti-Chalcedonians is, in fact, not a nature but a hypostasis (ch. 4; 83.17–84.15; 1925B–1928A). Then (ch. 5; 84.16–85.8; 1928B–D) follows a curious exchange – especially with respect to the history of science – about the possibility for the “unique nature of Christ” to be simply the unique instantiation of a species (the sun being another such example). Leontius answers that such a thing has to be properly called “hypostasis” and not “nature,” whereas the natures in Christ are different from each other. This question by the Acephalus and the

40. P. Gärdenfors, “Conceptual Spaces as a Framework for Knowledge Representation”, *Mind and Matter* 2 (2004) 9–27, here 10.

resulting part of the Orthodox's answer is a *locus communis* of the polemics around the Chalcedon.

The peculiarities of the species represented in unique objects had already been discussed by Aristotle (*Metaphysics* Z.15, where the sun is mentioned among such objects) but had never ceased to be under discussion. Only the “old-fashion” Neoplatonic tradition – those who were faithful to the Platonic view *universalia ante res* – accepted them without problems. All others confronted difficulties,⁴¹ especially dealing with the cases when more than one instantiation was thought to be theoretically impossible.⁴²

Leontius certainly surprises his readers – not only his direct opponent(s) – with the claim that, in a sharp contrast with the common opinion, such things as the sun or heaven are not single in their species: “Whether you do not know, oh my dear friend, that the nature of the sun is the same as that of the stars? And that the heaven is the same as the others heavens?”⁴³

Leontius had to be strongly motivated to make such a deviation from both normative cosmology⁴⁴ and the standard logical textbooks of his epoch. Such a radical claim – that there is no uniquely instantiated natures at all – looks too excessive for a habitual philosophical ping-pong game on the margins of the theological discussion with the anti-Chalcedonians. At first glance, this was not an advantageous position to take within the discussion. Thus, one has to conclude that Leontius needed such a claim for the logical consistency of his system as a whole.

In the philosophical traditions available to Leontius, the claim that there are no such things as species represented with unique individuals is a rather rare thing. Such a claim would be equivalent to the statement that even a

41. Cf. P. Adamson, “One of a Kind: Plotinus and Porphyry on Unique Instantiation,” in: R. Chiaradonna, G. Galluzzo, eds., *Universals in Ancient Philosophy*, Seminari e convegni 33, Pisa: Edizioni della Normale 2013, 329–351, where the ancient authors discussed are not only those mentioned in the title.

42. Cf. R. W. Sharples, “Alexander of Aphrodisias on Universals: Two Problematic Texts,” *Phronesis* 50 (2005) 43–55. Sharples discusses two kinds of universals in Alexander: those that are, in fact, exemplified in many instances and those that only *could* be exemplified in many instances.

43. Ἄλλ’ ἡγνόησας, ὧ βέλτιστε, ὅτι ἡ τοῦ ἡλίου φύσις ἡ αὐτὴ ἐστὶ τῆ τῶν ἄστρων; Καὶ ὁ οὐρανὸς ὁ αὐτὸς τοῖς λοιποῖς οὐρανοῖς; (84.19–20; 1928B). The idea of plurality of heavens seems to me rather Jewish-Christian than Greek.

44. In the normative (geocentric) cosmologies of antiquity the sun with its rotation around the earth was sharply divided from the fixed stars. However, the sun as one of the stars could be conceived in the heliocentric system of Aristarchus of Samos (ca 310–ca 230 BC), whose ideas are available to us (as, most probably, already to Leontius) through Archimedes, *Psammites (Arenarius et dimensio circuli)*; another and especially probable source of Leontius’ view would be Anaxagoras (5th cent. BC) with his idea that “the sun and the moon and all the stars are fiery stones [...]” (*apud* Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies*, 1.8.1.6; P. Curd, *Anaxagoras of Clazomenae, Fragments and Testimonia. A Text and Translation with Notes and Essays*, Phoenix pre-Socratics 6, Phoenix. Supplementary vol. 64, Toronto: University of Toronto Press 2007, 95); cf. Plato, *Phaedo* 97b8–98c2 (*ibid.*, 101).

unique instantiation of a nature is impossible if this nature would be taken-off. There is only instance, a saying ascribed to Alexander of Aphrodisias (2nd– early 3rd century), whose literal sense is like that.⁴⁵ However, Alexander was much more known by his apparently opposite statements, namely, that the unique objects such as the sun do not need to have anything common above them.⁴⁶ We have neither the need nor the possibility of going deeper into understanding the views of Alexander or those ascribed to him. We have to retain from this survey that Leontius’ rejection of natures with unique individuals was, indeed, a radical move away from the backdrop of sixth-century Aristotelism, although this was probably not entirely unique.

Now we know, especially thanks to David Lewis that the assumption of the classes having only one element (so-called singletons) leads to the paradox within any consistent logic. So far, there is no way to either define the class or the set without referring to the idea of the plurality of its elements or to provide a good logical foundation for the prohibition of singletons. Leontius, had he lived in our epoch, would face the same problem as David Lewis: the existence of modern mathematics which is based on the modern set theories. The latter, all without exception (including the NF theory by Quine, although Quine himself thought otherwise), do allow the existence of singletons, but, in this way, the mathematics reveals its problems with the logical consistency. Lewis has joked that it is certainly somebody else, not he, who would bring to the mathematicians this news. He personally was convinced that the paradox would be resolved in the future: “Singletons, and therefore all classes, are profoundly mysterious. Mysteries are an onerous

45. *Quaestio XIa*: διὸ ἀναιρεμένω μὲν ἐνὶ τῶν ὑπὸ τὸ κοινὸν οὐ συναναίρεται τὸ κοινόν, διότι ἔστιν ἐν πλείοσιν· εἰ δ’ ἀναιρεθῆι τὸ κοινόν, οὐδ’ ἂν τῶν ὑπὸ τὸ κοινόν εἴη τι, οἷς τὸ εἶναι ἐν τῷ ἐκείνω ἔχειν ἐν αὐτοῖς (“Therefore, doing away with one of the items under the common item does not do away with the common item as well, because it exists in many. But if the common item should be done away with, there would not exist any of the items under the common item, since their being lies in having that [common item] in them”); I. Bruns, *Alexandri Aphrodisiensis Praeter commentaria, Scripta minora: Quaestiones, De Fato, De Mixtione, Supplementum Aristotelicum*, vol. II, pars II, Berlin: G. Reimer 1892, 21.17–20; tr. M. M. Tweedale, “Alexander of Aphrodisias’ Views on Universals”, *Phronesis* 29 (1984) 279–303, here 289. This Martin M. Tweedale’s article was considered until now as the most exhaustive collection of the data relevant to its title.

46. See esp. but not uniquely Simplicius (early 6th century), *Commentary on the Categories*, 85.13 Kalbfleisch: ἀλλὰ κοινόν, φησίν, οὐδὲν εἶναι δύναται χωρὶς ἀτόμου, ἄτομον δὲ ἔστιν χωρὶς κοινού, οἷον ἡλίος καὶ σελήνη καὶ κόσμος (“But he [Alexander] says that the common item can be nothing apart from the individual, but the individual exists apart from the common item, for example, the sun, the moon, and the universe”); quoted and translated by Tweedale, “Alexander of Aphrodisias’...”, 283. As to the interpretation of the apparent contradictions within the works attributed to Alexander, it continues to be in the focus of a discussion. Cf., first of all, the same paper by Tweedale, and, then, among others, Sharples, “Alexander of Aphrodisias on Universals...,” and Ch. Helmig, *Forms and Concepts. Concept Formation in the Platonic Tradition*, *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca et Byzantina. Quellen und Studien* 5, Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter 2012, 161–164.

burden [...] And so I have to say, gritting my teeth, that somehow, I know not how, we do understand what it means to speak of singletons.”⁴⁷

The mathematics Leontius knew was still working without the set theories. Thus, Leontius’ condition was easier than that of Lewis: he could simply reject the singletons, as he did. What remained after this procedure is a consistent theory of universals, albeit a bit overloaded with the necessity of seeking for an appropriate common to any apparently unique individual of a species.

It is interesting to note that, although Leontius’ theory which belongs to the domains of philosophy and logic was obviously inspired by his theological thought, Lewis’ research led to the same point – acknowledgement of, at least, an apparent incompatibility of the singletons with logical consistency – out of his repulsion for what he has called “theology.”⁴⁸ In fact, both of them were acting out of their common repulsion for what we call now “intensional entities.”⁴⁹ In the case of Lewis, as well as with his direct predecessors Quine and Leśniewski, the intensional entities were rejected out of philosophical nominalism. The attitude of Leontius was somewhat similar but different, and it could be easily – but unjustly – confused with nominalism, and so needs to be approached after some preliminary explanations.

9. Moderate Realism and Its Problems of Consistency

As is well known,⁵⁰ the mainstream in the understanding of the universals throughout the whole “Byzantine Millennium” was the so-called moderate realism: *universalia in rebus* – and, thus, neither *ante res* nor *post res*. This

47. D. Lewis, *Parts of Classes*, Oxford: Blackwell 1991, 29–59, quoted 57, 59. The corresponding ideas of this book were rewritten in a more succinct way and with further elaboration in his 1993 paper, reprinted, with some corrections once more, as: D. Lewis, “Mathematics is megethology,” in: *idem, Papers in philosophical logic*, Cambridge studies in philosophy, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1998, 203–229. Lewis criticizes, among others, Quine’s attempt of excluding singletons from his own theory of sets, which is, according to Lewis, incomplete and, therefore, unsuccessful. Cf. esp. W. V. O. Quine, *Set Theory and Its Logic*. Rev. ed., Cambridge, MA, London: The Belknap Press 1969, 31–34. The complete and consecutive exclusion of the singletons (as something different from their elements) is a feature of an alternative to the modern set theory, the mereology of Stanisław Leśniewski, first proposed by him in 1916; cf. R. Urbaniak, *Leśniewski’s Systems of Logic and Foundations of Mathematics*, Trends in Logic 37, Cham etc.: Springer 2014, 113–114.

48. Cf. “Must set theory rest on theology? – Cantor thought so!” (Lewis, “Mathematics is megethology,” 215).

49. For this notion and its value in patristics, cf. B. Lourié, “The Philosophy of Dionysius....,” 89–92.

50. Especially after a series of studies by Linos Benakis. See his summarising article Λ. Γ. Μπενάκης, “Τὸ πρόβλημα τῶν γενικῶν ἐννοιῶν καὶ ὁ ἐννοιολογικὸς ρεαλισμὸς τῶν Βυζαντινῶν [1978–1979],” in: *idem, Βυζαντινὴ Φιλοσοφία. Κείμενα καὶ Μελέτες*, Athens: Παρουσία, 2002, 107–136, as well as several others reprinted in the same volume.

attitude, however, is the most difficult from a logical point of view. The classical logic does allow without problems both the strong realism of the Platonics (*ante res*) and nominalism, and the latter was not by chance so dear to the hearts of Leśniewski, Quine, David Lewis, as well as many other modern philosophers. Moderate realism leads to problems with the logical consistency, which either need to be accepted as such or taken as the impetus to look for a workaround. This is why, I suppose, concepts of this sort are so unpopular among modern philosophers, who prefer either Platonism or nominalism.

Basically, the problem is the following: what is an individual together with its universal, given that the latter exists, in some way, within this individual? If we consider a species as having a plurality of instantiations, then, there is a chance to evade the question with respect to a connection (but of what sort?⁵¹) between this given individual and all others within the species. If we discuss a singleton, even this loophole is closed.

We are dealing with a paraconsistent statement having the same type as that of the Russell set (“set of all sets”), namely, of the lack of self-identity, $X \neq X$. The Russell set includes all sets, and so, includes itself and, therefore, is not identical to itself:

$$(1) \quad \exists x((x \in x) \wedge (x \notin x))$$

The same is true about the singleton of a species which exists *in rebus*.⁵² Such an individual contains nothing but itself (because there is no Platonic idea accompanying it but having existence of its own) but, moreover, it contains its species (although we do not discuss in what way it is contained). Extensionally, it possesses self-identity but, intensionally, it does not. One can write for an individual x , which is the unique member of the singleton set $\{x\}$:

$$(2) \quad \forall x((x = \{x\}) \wedge (x \neq \{x\}))$$

One can see from this that paraconsistency follows from the acknowledgement of intensional entities without allowing to them separate (*ante res*) existence.

The left part of the conjunction (2) represents the nominalist attitude, whereas its right part the strong realist (Platonic) attitude, and only their

51. Cf. Lewis' discussion of the “Lasso hypothesis” invented – and rejected – by himself: Lewis, *Parts of Classes*, 42–45.

52. Here and below I omit the reservations for excluding the ontological commitment, because they are rather self-evident (we can easily substitute for “existence” something like “existence in some possible/impossible world(s)” etc.) and, although necessary for an exhaustive logical discussion, are excessive in the case of the problems discussed within the framework of the “applied philosophy” of Byzantine dogmatics. All these problems were considered in relation to our unique real world, although this world itself was somewhat different from the world where the most of modern philosophers live...

paraconsistent conjunction results in the moderate realism of the *universalia in rebus*.

If we do not accept nominalism, this intensional “addition” to its self-identity has some ontological weight – it is an existing intensional entity. Therefore, ontologically, the individual of a singleton contains itself as a class containing an individual but, at the same time, it is contained itself and therefore differs from itself as the containing one. The above statement, first written for the Russell set, is applicable to any singleton, *given that the universalia do exist in rebus*.

The “mystery” of the singleton, as David Lewis coined it, consists in its paraconsistency – tolerated in the “naïve” set theory by Cantor,⁵³ passed un-discussed by Zermelo and Fraenkel, and unsuccessfully attacked by Quine. The singleton is equal to itself but is also more than itself; it contains itself but is also contained by itself. The singleton is a member of itself and is not a member of itself – precisely in the same manner as the Russell set. This understanding of the singleton the naïve and ZF set theories share with the mainstream of Byzantine ontology⁵⁴ – but not with Leontius of Byzantium.

Leontius does not allow the paraconsistent conjunction (2) but he does not subscribe to the nominalist formula $\{x\} \equiv x$, either. He does not allow singletons at all. For him, the species exist if and only if they are instantiated in plurality of individuals. Thus, he avoids both paraconsistency and nominalism. He managed to find out a workaround. We have already seen that Leontius’ original idea was lying in the field of mathematics: he invented graphs to become able to construct a consistent and original ontology.

10. *Unreality of the Division between the Two Natures in Christ*

Leontius explains his original Christological ideas only in the last two chapters of the *Solutio* (chs. 7 and 8). Before this, he was mostly concerned with his original ideas in logic, numerology, and ontology. In the last chapters he shows what purpose this newly created philosophical doctrine serves.

At first, the Acephalus formulates the main argument known from the *Arbiter* of Philoponus (esp. its ch. 7 preserved in Greek). It is very friendly toward the Chalcedonians and was, indeed, elaborated in the perspective of

53. On some of Cantor’s paraconsistent intuitions, as well as recent proposals of paraconsistent set theories, see W. Carnielli, M. E. Coniglio, “Paraconsistent set theory by predicating on consistency,” *Journal of Logic and Computation*, advanced access published 09. 07. 2013; doi:10.1093/logcom/ext020. For different ways open to “rehabilitation” of the “naïve” set theory, see A. Weir, “Naïve Set Theory Is Innocent!,” *Mind* 107 (1998) 763–798, esp. 792–793.

54. See above, section 4, on Eulogius of Alexandria and, after him, the Christology of the defenders of icons in the ninth century.

the union (which failed at the Council of 553):⁵⁵ your unique but composite hypostasis is the same thing as our unique but composite nature (86.15–25; 1929D–1932A). Some phrases here are of special interest, however. “We too, consider the (two) natures only in thought (Τὰς φύσεις μόνη τῆ ἐπινοία καὶ ἡμεῖς θεωροῦμεν),” given that the concrete and the real one is one resulting from the two nature of Christ; “in the same manner, you understand the (two) hypostases in thought and unify them into the unique hypostasis [...] (Ὡι γὰρ λόγῳ ἡμεῖς τὰς ὑποστάσεις τῆ ἐπινοία λαμβάνοντες, καὶ ταύτας ἐνώσαντες εἰς μίαν ὑπόστασιν αὐτὰς συντίθετε [...])” (89.15–18; 1929D).

One can see that, so far, the Acephalus still does not grasp the difference between the particular nature in its Leontian understanding and the hypostasis. Thus, he understands “from two natures” (a common slogan of the two sides of the conflict over the Chalcedon) in the Chalcedonian terminology as equivalent to “from two hypostases.” Moreover, he accepts that the two natures of Christ before the union existed “only in thought.” This can be understood in either a traditional (for both anti-Chalcedonians and neo-Chalcedonians) way, that the two natures of Christ before union could be discussed only in a speculative manner, or in a properly Philoponian way, that these natures are *per se* abstractions without any self-standing existence. We will see that Leontius (“the Orthodox”) will perceive the term τῆ ἐπινοία in the latter sense.⁵⁶

In his response, Leontius defines two different kinds of ἐπίνοια (86.26–87.10, quoted below 86.26–87.6; 1932AB):

Τὴν ἐπίνοιαν οἱ Πατέρες καὶ ὁ ἀληθὴς λόγος διττὴν ἀπερήναντο εἶναι. Ἡ μὲν γὰρ οἷον ἐπένοια τίς ἐστὶ καὶ ἐπενθύμησις, τὴν ὀλοσχερῆ καὶ ἀδιάρθρωτον τῶν πραγμάτων ἐξ-πλοῦσά τε καὶ διασαφοῦσα θεωρίαν καὶ γνῶσιν, ὡς τὸ τῆ αἰσθήσει δόξαν εἶναι ἀπλοῦν, τῆ πολυπραγμοσύνη τοῦ νοῦ πολυμερές τε καὶ ποικίλον ἀναφαίνεσθαι.	The Fathers and the true reasoning defined two different kinds of <i>epinoia</i> . According to the first one, it is something like (analytical) reflection, ⁵⁷ which unfolds and clarifies for contemplation and knowledge the wholeness and non-compositeness of real things, whose being seems to the sensual apperception to be simple but, with (the help of) the inquisitiveness of the intellect, is revealed to be manifold and diversified.
---	---

ἡ δὲ ἀνάπλασμα διανοίας τυγχάνει, According to the second meaning, it is the ima-

55. See for all details, U. M. Lang, *John Philoponus and the Controversies over Chalcedon in the Sixth Century. A Study and Translation of the “Arbiter,”* Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense. Études et documents, fasc. 47, Leuven: Peeters 2001.

56. Unfortunately, I had no access to the complete text of the monograph by Antonio Orbe, *La epinoia. Algunos preliminares históricos de la distinción κατ’ ἐπίνοιαν.* (En torno a la Filosofía de Leoncio Bizantino), Roma: Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana 1955.

57. On the pair of synonymic words ἐπένοια and ἐπενθύμησις precisely in our text, see G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1961, 514, s.vv. The first of the two is lacking from the Liddell–Scott dictionary.

κατὰ συμπλοκὴν αἰσθήσεώς τε καὶ γίναν⁵⁸ which, combining the (data of) sensual (apperception) and the fantasy, constructs from the existing things what can never exist but believes them to be existing: such are the mythical creatures like hippocentaurs or Sirens [...] [...]

The *epinoia* of the second kind takes some parts of the really existing things and composes, albeit only in the mind and the words (ἐν τῇ διανοίᾳ καὶ τοῖς λόγοις), something new which has neither hypostasis nor essence (τὰ μηδαμῶς ἐν ὑποστάσει καὶ οὐσίᾳ θεωρούμενα).

Then, the Orthodox becomes able to proceed to the salient question: “Thus, which one of these two kinds of *epinoia* do you mean, oh excellent one, when you consider the two natures?” (87.11–12; 1932B: Κατὰ ποῖαν τοῖνον, ὦ θαυμάσιε, τῶν ἐπινοιῶν τούτων θεωρίαν τὰς δύο φύσεις λαμβάνεις;). Of course, the second alternative would lead to an arbitrary fantasy, if not directly to the idolatry (87.14–17; 1932BC). But the first one is not much better: “If (you mean) the first kind (of *epinoia*), you would define the Christ as being a gathering of objects of contemplation but not as coming together of the (two) natures, because such is the nature of the things that are contemplated only by *epinoia*” (87.11–14; 1932BC: Εἰ μὲν οὖν κατὰ τὴν πρώτην, θεωρημάτων ἄθροισμα ἀλλ’ οὐ φύσεων σύνοδον τὸν Χριστὸν εἶναι ὀρίσῃ· τοιαύτη γὰρ ἡ φύσις τῶν ἐπινοιά μόνῃ θεωρητῶν).

We have to retain from there this clear definition of *epinoia*, in whatever meaning, as something that is related to mental constructs outside the reality.

What follows is a critic of Monophysitism, but not only for “mixing” the two natures into one but also for denying their existence whatsoever: “Because, from the very fact of understanding the natures only with *epinoia*, it follows for them to be nonexistent and non-being, or demolished and disappeared” (88.5–7; 1932D: Αὐτὸ μὲν οὖν τὸ τῇ ἐπινοιά μόνῃ τὰς φύσεις γνωρίζειν τὸ ἀνύπαρκτον αὐτῶν καὶ ἀνούσιον, ἢ τὸ συγκεχυμένον καὶ ἠφανισμένον κατασκευάζει).

Leontius’ own teaching – that he, of course, ascribes to “our Fathers” – is that not the natures themselves but only their division in Christ is to be apprehended by the *epinoia* in the first meaning of the term.⁵⁹ Thus, he considers the division of the natures in Christ as not only understandable through an analytical procedure but also existing only in our mind.

58. The meaning of the idiom ἀνάπλασμα διανοίας is precisely that, “imagination”.

59. 87.17–19; 1932C: ὅποτε οἱ Θεοπέσιτοι ἡμῶν Πατέρες οὐ τὰς φύσεις τῇ ἐπινοιά εἶναι ὠρίσαντο, ἀλλὰ τὴν διαίρεσιν τούτων κατὰ τὴν πρώτην ἐπίνοιαν ἐξειλήφασιν.

11. Unreality of “Three” in the Holy Trinity?

The most revealing of Leontius’ triadological passages is found in a long explanation about two kinds of difference: the purely mental one, by *epinoia*, and the real one which he calls “by energy” (ch. 7, *passim*, with repetitions in ch. 8). There is no need to collect all the relevant formulations by Leontius because all of them repeat the same idea.

The natures themselves exist not “by *epinoia*,” as said the Acephalus, but “by energy” (in reality), however, the difference between them is only “by *epinoia*.” the Fathers “[...] demonstrated the natures as being and called according to the energy, whereas the division between them they understood by *epinoia* (87.22–23; 1932C: [...] τῆ μὲν ἐνεργείᾳ τὰς φύσεις εἶναι τε καὶ καλεῖσθαι ἀπεφήναντο, τὴν δὲ τούτων διαίρεσιν κατ’ ἐπίνοιαν ἔλαβον).

The division “by energy” would produce difference between the hypostases, and this is why – Leontius here continues to answer the initial question of the Acephalus – we do not say that Christ is produced from the two hypostases (88.10–21; 1933AB): “[...] the division by energy implies and establishes hypostases, whereas the division by *epinoia* does not entail the number of hypostases” (88.19–21; 1933B: [...] τῆς κατ’ ἐνέργειαν διαιρέσεως τὰς ὑποστάσεις ἐχούσης τε καὶ τιθεμένης, ἢ κατ’ ἐπίνοιαν διαίρεσις τὸν τῶν ὑποστάσεων ἀριθμὸν οὐ παραδέχεται).⁶⁰ – Let us notice the mention of number here. Leontius demonstrates that Christ is not divisible into two hypostases, and so, the notion of number here is the ordinary one.

Immediately after the sentence just quoted Leontius continues, taking an example from the Holy Trinity (88.21–24; 1933B):

Ὡς γὰρ τὸ κατ’ ἐπίνοιαν μεῖζον ἐπὶ τὸν Πατέρα καὶ Υἱοῦ, τῆ τοῦ αἰτίου λεγόμενον φύσει, τὸ τῆ φύσει μεῖζον οὐ συνεισάγει, οὕτω τὸ κατ’ ἐπίνοιαν διαιρετὸν τὸ κατ’ ἐνέργειαν οὐ συνεισάξει ποτὲ, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο οὐδὲ τὰς ὑποστάσεις. When it is said by *epinoia* “greater” concerning the Father and the Son [John 14:28] because of being the cause by nature,⁶¹ nothing greater is co-introduced to the nature. In the same manner, the division by *epinoia* would never co-introduce the division by energy, and, therefore, (never co-introduce) the hypostases.

One question would be in order here: in what manner then do the hypostases of the Holy Trinity differ from each other, by *epinoia* or by energy – or even somehow else? Leontius does not give us any explicit answer, neither does he provide any third kind of division. The division could be either real, by energy, like that between three men, or by *epinoia*, as between the two

60. Leontius elaborates further on the topic, but either repeats himself or repeats the standard anti-Nestorian argumentation of his epoch. Cf. in the same ch. 7, 89.13–90.8; 1933D–1936C; ch. 8, 95.30–96.13; 1944D–1945A.

61. Leontius alludes to the common patristic understanding of John 14:28 as pointing out that the Father is the “cause” within the divine nature, that is, the principle of the *μοναρχία* in the Holy Trinity.

natures of Christ, but also – let us recall what was said by Leontius in ch. 2 – between ten cubits within a ten cubit piece of wood⁶² and, as we now are forced to acknowledge, between the three hypostases of the divine nature.

I admit that now I am trying to carry through what Leontius himself left unarticulated. Indeed, had he said that the three hypostases of the Holy Trinity differ only by *epinoia*, he would face charge of Sabellianism. He would also have had a hard time explaining his original theory of graphs.

Leontius defends the unity of the conceptual apparatus used in both “theology” and “œconomy,” and so we would expect from him an explanation of why he describes the three divine hypostases in conformity with his own definition of particular natures but still calls them hypostases. In his language where the particular natures differ from each other as the vertices of a graph, whereas the hypostases differ from each other as enumerable things divided “by energy,” the notion of hypostasis was tacitly changing its meaning when applied to the Holy Trinity. Leontius’ escaping from the para-consistency of patristic thought cost him inconsistency in his own usage of a key term, hypostasis.

Leontius left too many loose ends after having changed his mind from the Christology of *CNE* to that of the *Solutio*. The building of his dogmatics was left with no chance to be completed.

12. Christology

We still have not quoted the famous Christological passage of ch. 8 but our analysis of Leontius’ philosophy and logic is accomplished. We still need, however, to learn more about his theology. This is why ch. 8 will be especially important to us. Mostly, this final chapter contains various repetitions of earlier statements or the *trivia* of such polemics, but among them there are important theological applications of the logical and ontological principles formulated earlier.

Leontius revisits his initial problem with which he had started the whole discussion in the very beginning of his treatise: how to understand the human individuality of Christ. Now, it has already been explained that, in logical categories, it is a particular nature, in Leontius’ specific understanding of this notion. Thus, it is time to explain it in a more theological way.

The larger context is as follows. Leontius needs to explain why his understanding of the human individuality in Christ does not lead him to acknowledge Jesus as a human hypostasis (as the Nestorians do). However, he turns

62. This example must be understood in the context of Leontius’ “geometrical” approach. Thus, the cubits here are geometrically different (within a graph), and the whole example is not to be confounded with the unity of money in the bank account (the famous comparison explaining the indiscernibility of quantum objects invented by Erwin Schrödinger in the 1950s); cf. S. French, D. Krause, *Identity in Physics: A Historical, Philosophical, and Formal Analysis*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 2006, 142–143, 159, 220, 370–371.

out to be unable to exclude the pre-existence of Christ’s humanity on a purely theoretical level, albeit he, of course, excludes it as a fact. Marcel Richard was still too moderate when saying, about this statement of Leontius, that “[c]’était jouer avec le feu.”⁶³

Probably, Leontius did not explicitly contradict any authoritative text of his epoch but he did certainly contradict the mainstream (among the neo-Chalcedonians) theological intuition which, in the 580s, resulted in Eulogius of Alexandria’s (paraconsistent) statement that the conjunction of a nature with the individual characteristics of an individual still does not form a hypostasis. There would be no Jesus without the divine Logos, who accepted the individual characteristics of Jesus and thus became – but only the Logos himself now called Jesus – one of the individuals of the *human* common nature. Jesus is simply the name of the Logos as a hypostasis of the human nature, in the same manner as the Son is the name of the same Logos as a hypostasis of the divine nature. The one and unique hypostasis of the Logos thus became common to the two natures at once and acquired the individual characteristics (idioms) as an individual of each of the two natures. I recalled these explanations of Nicephorus of Constantinople and Theodore the Studite to facilitate our tracing of Leontius’ attempts to avoid these (paraconsistent) Christological conclusions.

Leontius approaches the problem of the pre-existence of Christ’s humanity from the analogy of the resurrection of the dead (94.24–95.18; 1941D–1944B). This example allows him to conclude that “from this it is shown that it is acceptable for a hypostasis to be produced out of the previously existing things without (their) change, even if it is not completely applicable to Christ because he is not created beforehand.”⁶⁴ It is worth noting that Leontius considers the resurrected bodies as being materially identical to the dead ones, and so, he is following the line of Gregory of Nyssa rather than the Origenistic line of Philoponus or Eutychius of Constantinople.⁶⁵

Then, Leontius proceeds to the issue that turns out to be the touchstone of his Christology (95.19–30; 1944CD)⁶⁶:

Τὸ δέ τινας λέγειν, διὰ τὸ μὴ προδια- As to the fact that some say: because the
πεπλάσθαι μηδὲ προϋφεστάναι τὴν Lord’s humanity was not formed or did not
τοῦ Κυρίου ἀνθρωπότητα μηδὲ τε- exist beforehand, and because it was not as-
λεϊάν προσειληφθαι, ἀλλ’ ἐν τῷ Λόγῳ sumed already complete, but has its being in

63. M. Richard, “Léonce...”, 60.

64. 94.32–34; 1944A: Ἐξ ὧν δείκνυται ὅτι καὶ ἐκ προϋφεστῶτων πραγμάτων ὑπόστασιν γενέσθαι ἀτρέπτως ἐνδέχεται, εἰ καὶ ὅλως ἐπὶ Χριστοῦ τοῦτο οὐ δίδοται, ὅτι οὐ προδιαπέπλασθαι.

65. B. Lourié, “John Philoponus on the Bodily Resurrection”; B. M. Лурье, “Идентичность человеческой личности по Иоанну Филопону...”.

66. I mostly owe my English translation below to Brian Daley, “The Origenism of Leontius of Byzantium,” *Journal of Theological Studies*, N. S. 27 (1976) 333–369, here 338.

ὑποστῆναι, διὰ τοῦτο μίαν ὑπόστα-
 σιν ἀμφοτέρων ποιεῖν, τὸ μὲν τι ἀλη-
 θές, τὸ δὲ οὐκ ἀληθές ὄν τυγχάνει.
 Τὸ μὲν γὰρ μὴ προῦφεστᾶναι μὴδὲ
 προδιαπεπλάσθαι καὶ ἡμεῖς δώσομεν,
 τὸ δὲ διὰ τοῦτο μίαν ὑπόστασιν ποιεῖν,
 ὡς οὐκ ἐγχωροῦν ἄλλως οὐδὲ δυνα-
 τὸν Θεῶ καὶ τελείῳ ἀνθρώπῳ οὕτως
 ἐνωθῆναι, οὐκέτι δώσομεν. Τί γάρ;
 Οὕτως ἢ ἐκείνως ἔχον τι πλεόν ἔσται
 Θεῶ εἰς ἔνωσιν; Οὐτε γὰρ ὁ χρόνος τῆς
 ἐνώσεως ἢ ὁ τόπος ἢ τὸ ἀτελές τοῦ σώ-
 ματος, ἀλλ' αὐτὸς ὁ τῆς ἐνώσεως τρό-
 πος τὸν ἕνα Χριστὸν πεποίηκεν. Οὐ
 τοίνυν διὰ τὸ ἀδύνατον, ἀλλὰ διὰ τὸ
 μὴ πρέπειν ψιλὴν ποτε καὶ ἄνευ θεό-
 τιτος εἶναι τὴν τοῦ Κυρίου ἀνθρωπό-
 τιτα, τὴν προδιάπλασιν ἐκβάλλομεν.

the Logos therefore they make one hypostasis
 of both – part of this is true and part is not.
 We, too, grant that (his humanity) did not pre-
 exist, was not formed first; but we do not at all
 grant that one therefore makes one hypostasis
 of both, as if it were not permitted for things
 to be otherwise, or as if it were impossible for
 God to be united even with a complete man
 in this way. But why? Is there any import-
 ance for God whether the union would be in
 this way or another? In fact, the unique Christ
 is made not by the time or the place of the
 union or by the imperfection of the body⁶⁷ but
 by the very mode (*tropos*) of union. We reject
 the prior formation [i.e. of Christ's humanity]
 not because it was impossible, but because it
 was not fitting that the humanity of the Lord
 should once have been alone and without his
 divinity.

Thus, the particular human nature of Jesus, according Leontius, existed independently of the fact of the incarnation, even though its creation was synchronised with the moment of incarnation.

Of course, even in the case of the “prior formation” of Christ’s humanity, the principle forbidding any φύσις ἀνυπόστατος⁶⁸ would not be broken. This particular nature of Jesus would use, for its temporary being without divinity, some other hypostasis than that of the Logos, that is, a human hypostasis – for instance, of some Mr X, let us say. In Leontius’ approach, this would not cause a problem with the identity of the humanity of the further Jesus with that of Mr X: the unity of subject would be guaranteed by the human particular nature that was at first ἐνυπόστατος in Mr X, then in the Logos viz. Jesus. It is needless to say that such a thought experiment would render quite a different result in the classical perspective of the Byzantine (neo-Chalcedonian) patristics: here, the humanity of Mr X would be inseparable from the hypostasis of Mr X, because no such things as particular natures which are different from the hypostases exist.

Leontius’ treatment of the humanity of Christ makes it a separate subject within the unique Christ, and so, is really crypto-Nestorian from any “neo-Chalcedonian” point of view.

67. “Imperfection” in the sense that the incarnation took place at the very moment of conception, unlike the alternative scenario – considered by Leontius as theoretically acceptable – as if it took place when Jesus grew up, that is, when his body became “perfect.” Cf. discussion above in ch. 8 and the standard mode of speaking about growing of the human body.

68. CNE I, 1, quoted in footnote 22 above.

Now we are in position to summarise the Christological doctrine of Leontius. For this purpose, we have to recall Leontius’ “theory of graphs” as was used by him to create an original understanding of the notion of particular nature.

The doctrine of Leontius could be summarised in these three points:

- 1) The humanity of Jesus does not exist and never existed as a numerically distinct separate entity. This is why both open Nestorianism and Theodore of Mopsuestia’s Christology are unacceptable.
- 2) It does exist since the incarnation – and *could* exist before incarnation but actually did not – as a numerically distinct *position* within the common nature of the humankind, which is a particular human nature. This is an original idea of Leontius himself and exists in his *Solutio* only.
- 3) The humanity of Jesus is not the common nature of the humankind – *pace* the whole *consensus* of the Chalcedonian theologians including Leontius himself in *CNE*.

It is tempting to suppose that Leontius’ “theory of graphs” was designed to supply a rational model for the Origenistic *Henas*. At least, its Christological and Triadological applications would fit the theology of the *Protoctist* Origenism, and I sympathise with István Perczel’s idea that Leontius belonged to that group.⁶⁹

13. *John Philoponus behind the Scenes*

It was only Richard Cross who asked himself what happened to Leontius between *CNE* and the *Solutio*, but his answer was “It is not clear why LB changed his mind [...]”⁷⁰ Given that the time span when the *Solutio* could have been written is to be expanded up to the epoch of the Council of 553, and especially with reference to the preceding Christological discussions, we can take a fresh look at the already known polemical parallels between the *Arbiter* by Philoponus (esp. its ch. 7) and Leontius of Byzantium.

Philoponus was trying to present “the unique nature” of the Severians as the same thing as “the unique hypostasis” of the (neo-)Chalcedonians. The idea of the humanity of Christ as a particular nature was in the core of his argumentation. There are some other polemical parallels with the *Solutio*, one of them being already reviewed by Uwe Lang.⁷¹ This is Philoponus’ argumentation against those Chalcedonians who deduce their “unique hypostasis” from the fact that the humanity of Christ did not exist prior to the incarnation. To the contrary, Philoponus himself deduces from the same fact

69. I. Perczel, “Once Again...”.

70. R. Cross, “Individual Natures...”, 250.

71. U. M. Lang, *John Philoponus...*, 70–72.

Christ's "unique nature." Leontius, as we have just seen, denies the argumentation of both sides, because he does not allow as a derivative of this fact anything featuring the mode of the union (ὁ τῆς ἐνώσεως τρόπος) in Christ. It appears then that it was Leontius who wrote after Philoponus, and not *vice versa* (*pace* Lang). But, anyway, this is a secondary detail.

The main project of Philoponus on the eve of 553 was a reinterpretation of the Chalcedonian "unique hypostasis" as a particular nature, which would open the way to allow the official Church under Justinian to adopt the basic assumptions of Severian Christology. We see the Chalcedonian position that there is no such thing as a particular nature which is not identical to the hypostasis staggered precisely in the middle of the sixth century. This is the historical context in which Leontius' change of mind would seem most natural – especially if he did really keep his Origenistic skeleton in the closet.

This is why I would consider the *Solutio* to be a response provoked by a challenge of John Philoponus.

a DPhil from the University of Oxford (1997) and a Dr. theol. habil. from Humboldt University, Berlin (2011). His research interests lie in late ancient theology and philosophy as well as modern theology. Major publications include *Human Nature in Gregory of Nyssa* (2000), *Theology as Science in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (2013), and *Individuality in Late Antiquity* (ed. with A. Torrance, 2014).

JOSÉ MARÍA NIEVA is an Associate Professor of Ancient Philosophy at the Department of Philosophy of the University of Tucumán (Argentina). He is the autor of *Ver en el no-ver: Ensayo crítico sobre el De Mystica Theologia de Dionisio Areopagita* (Tucumán, EUNT, 2010), and of several articles concerning Dionysius the Areopagite and other Platonic and Neoplatonic thinkers.

FILIP IVANOVIĆ was born in Podgorica (Montenegro) in 1986. He earned his PhD from the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies of the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim, with a thesis entitled *Love, Beauty, Deification: The Erotic-Aesthetic Soteriology of Dionysius the Areopagite and Maximus the Confessor*. As for previous education, he holds BA and MA degrees from the Department of Philosophy of the University of Bologna. Among his publications are the edited volume *Dionysius the Areopagite between Orthodoxy and Heresy* (2011) and the monograph *Symbol and Icon: Dionysius the Areopagite and the Iconoclastic Crisis* (2010), as well as several other journal articles and book chapters. As organizer or speaker he participated at over twenty international conferences and symposia in Argentina, UK, Greece, Spain, Israel, etc. In 2010 he was a guest fellow at the Centre for the Study of Antiquity and Christianity of the University of Aarhus, and in 2013 he spent a semester in Athens as a fellow of the Onassis Foundation, with affiliation to the Norwegian Institute and the National Hellenic Research Foundation. He is a member of a number of professional and academic associations, including *Société Internationale pour l'Étude de la Philosophie Médiévale*, *International Society for Neoplatonic Studies*, and *Association Internationale d'Études Patristiques*. His areas of interest include Greek and Byzantine philosophy, patristics, and Christian studies.

BASIL LOURIÉ, b. 1962, PhD (2002), and Dr habil. (2008) in Philosophy (St. Petersburg State University), the Editor-in-Chief of *Scrinium: A Journal of Patrology, Critical Hagiography, and Church History*, Senior Research Fellow of the St. Petersburg State University of Aerospace Instrumentation.

VLADIMIR CVETKOVIĆ, PhD, is an independent researcher based in Göttingen, Germany, Germany. He is also a non-residential research fellow of the Institute of Philosophy and Social Theory of the University of Belgrade, Serbia. Previously he conducted research and taught at the universities of Aarhus (Denmark), St Andrews (UK), Oslo (Norway), Belgrade and Nis (Serbia). His research interests include Patristics and Byzantine tradition, especially Gregory of Nyssa and Maximus the Confessor, as well as Modern Orthodox